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ABSTRACT

The art of military deception is one that can be seen in action and is quoted throughout history. Though it has wavered in doctrine, it has maintained in academia for as long as recorded history portraying conflicts has existed. In modern times, the concept of low-intensity conflict has become an increasingly prevalent style of war. The increased role of non-state actors in conflict has brought this style of war to the forefront in the current state of conflict and for many years to come. This thesis looks to answer the question as to whether or not military deception, especially those operations conducted on strategic level targets, is still a viable tool. It will look at three different historical case studies of military deception inside of the imperatives and operational categories of low-intensity conflict. At the end, there will be an answer to this question as well as a recommendation for the future of military deception operations to further enhance military deception in what has become the dominating current and future style of war known as low-intensity conflict.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The element of surprise in military operations, which is psychological warfare translated into field tactics, is achieved by artifice and stratagem, by secrecy and rapidity of information, by mystifying and misleading the enemy.

- William Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services

Background

In recent years, the United States has been forced by the very nature of emerging conflict to move towards a style of war that operates below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. The introduction and continued presence of non-state actors such as DAESH and other terrorist organizations have increased the need for a focus on the style of war known as low-intensity conflict. There are many tools for conducting operations under this paradigm. Most fall under the ownership of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). These include, but are not limited to, Civil Affairs (CA), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Special Forces (SF), and other Special Operations capabilities. Other tools may include those that fall within the realm of Information Operations (IO). These also include Public Affairs (PA), Military Deception (MILDEC), and Electronic Warfare (EW). Of all of these tools MILDEC and its relevancy within the low-intensity conflict paradigm is what will be the focus of this thesis.

Though the concept of MILDEC has been around since the beginning of warfare it has not been given a permanent role in the command and control structure of the United States military. Due to the classified nature of this tool, and an assumed desire to keep information about the tool as close hold as possible, there may be operations being conducted outside of publically available literature. Because of this limitation, this paper will look at MILDEC in the framework of its place in policy and doctrine. The question this thesis looks to answer is can

MILDEC, in the form of Strategic MILDEC, effectively support operations in an era where low-intensity conflict is the dominant style of warfare?

Purpose

Due to the very nature of Strategic MILDEC, it is nearly impossible to ignore the impact that it has on the Diplomacy, Information, and Military instruments of national power. Each of the instruments of national power are vital to the development of a tool that is useful inside of any style of warfare, past, present or future. Since the current and future paradigm of warfare is low-intensity conflict, this thesis will look at Strategic MILDEC inside of that paradigm. Low-intensity conflict is a concept that did not receive much focus since it disappeared from military doctrine in 2003.

First defined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1985 and published in the 1987 National Security Strategy (NSS), it has gained much more focus since the events of September 11, 2001. However, the United States government had every intention of pushing its way into Iraq with a strong show of military might and kinetic operations. Professing these kinds of operations as low-intensity is not something the United States population, or the rest of the world, would have accepted. It was at this point that the operational categories that low-intensity conflict once contained were put under a new title, irregular warfare. However, the definitions and doctrinal layout used to describe low-intensity conflict still provides a more concise framework for what is the current and future shape of conflict and so this body of work will continue to use the terminology low-intensity conflict and its definition as it is prescribed by earlier doctrine.

Approach

This thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter two will define various terms needed to understand this body of work. First, it will define select terms necessary for an understanding of the elements of

Strategic MILDEC, Strategic MILDEC itself and the newly dominating style of warfare known as low-intensity conflict. This will include defining the general concept of MILDEC as it is defined in joint military doctrine. Since this is the core element of Strategic MILDEC, a general understanding of the base concept of MILDEC is essential. Chapter three will also define the three levels of war. Understanding the existence and definition of these levels of war gives clarity to the first half of the term Strategic MILDEC. Because MILDEC exists at all levels of war, it is necessary to acknowledge all levels and their MILDEC counterpart to make the difference between the different levels of MILDEC very clear.

Because this is focusing on a level of MILDEC that conducts operations at the national level, there is an intermingling of MILDEC and select instruments of national power. These instruments of national power also require a definition to make sense of MILDEC's existence at the strategic level of war. Once there is a thorough understanding of Strategic MILDEC, chapter three will look to define the concept of low-intensity conflict. All definitions will do their best to be prescribed by joint level, and hence national level, sources.

Chapter three will contain a literature review of various works pertaining to Military Deception, its conduct, concept structure, theories, and doctrinal references. Chapter four will take a deeper look at the concept of low-intensity conflict and the imperatives and operational categories that make it up. It will also make the connection between MILDEC and low-intensity conflict within the parameters of these imperatives and operational categories. Next, it will look at particular historical case studies focusing on how Strategic MILDEC successfully accomplished supporting missions within the same framework. Lastly, chapter five will discuss conclusions and policy recommendations for the future of MILDEC in both doctrine and the command and control for the future use of MILDEC. There will also be proposals for future

research to help further the development and better use of MILDEC with low-intensity conflict and Special Operations Forces (SOF).

CHAPTER 2: DEFINITIONS AND BOUNDARIES

Most controversies would soon be ended, if those engaged in them would first accurately define their terms, and then adhere to their definitions.

- Tyron Edwards, American Theologian

Military Deception

Before continuing, it is necessary to make sure there is an understanding of how certain terminology will be used throughout this body of work. Before the concept of Strategic MILDEC can be understood, certain elements of the concept must be understood. First and foremost, there must be an understanding of how MILDEC is defined. *Joint Publication (JP) 3-13.4, Military Deception*, defines MILDEC as “those actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary military decision makers as to friendly military capabilities, intentions, and operations, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission” (CJCS 2006, I-1). This will be the definition used throughout this body of work as the base for the concept of general MILDEC.

However, as the name implies, there is more to Strategic MILDEC than just the basic idea of what MILDEC accomplishes. In United States joint military doctrine there are three levels of war. These are tactical, operational, and strategic. Similar to nearly every other style of operation in the armed forces, MILDEC falls under these levels of war. Although the focus of this paper is the strategic level of war, it is important to see the existence of MILDEC throughout all levels of war. The presence of MILDEC at all levels shows a written doctrinal importance and inclusion that needs to be acknowledged nation-wide for military deception to act to its full potential in not just low-intensity conflict but in warfare in general.

Levels of War

Tactical

JP 1-02, Department of Defense (DoD) Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms as well as *JP 3-0, Joint Operations*, gives definitions of all three levels of war. The lowest level is the tactical level and JP 1-02 and JP 3-0 give a very concise definition of this level of war when it defines it as “the level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces” (CJCS 2015, 238, 2011, GL-17). JP 3-0 goes into a little more detail by defining certain aspects of *JP 1-02*’s definition earlier in the publication when it says that “tactics is the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. Joint doctrine focuses this term on planning and executing battles, engagements, and activities at the tactical level to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces” (CJCS 2011, xii).

For MILDEC, Tactical MILDEC would be military deception operations that are aimed at influencing the actions and decisions of commanders directly in control of tactical units to include companies, rifle teams, squads, and platoons. Affecting these smaller units allows MILDEC to have an immediate effect on tactical situation (CJCS 2006, I-4). This is one of the more common uses of MILDEC and should be utilized to support operational and strategic level MILDEC operations.

Operational

The next level of war is defined as the operational level of war. This level of war contains the largest degree of planning and coordination. This is the level at which campaigns and major operations are planned conducted and sustained (CJCS 2011, GL-14, 2015, 180). Despite this, United States Army joint doctrine has very little to say about this level of war. The *JP 3-0* only looks at the operational level as a link between that tactical and strategic level in the body of its text (CJCS 2011, xi). With regards to Operational MILDEC, this is a style of MILDEC that

seeks to influence a higher level of command than Tactical MILDEC seeks to influence. Its goal is to influence operational level leaders and hence the planning and coordination of major operations and campaigns (CJCS 2006, I-4). These leaders may include battalion, brigade, corps, and division commanders.

This includes the largest amount of command teams and could potentially be looked at as one of the more important levels of MILDEC. However, operational level campaigns and operations are still designed to support national strategic goals and objectives. Because of this, although influence on this level of war should not be ignored, the influence level needs to be aimed higher to the highest level of war, the strategic level.

Strategic

The last and highest level is the strategic level of war. All the other levels of war draw on the objectives and goals developed at this level in order to establish their objectives and mission intent. Between *JP 3-0* and *JP 1-02* a general definition of the strategic level of war can be formed to state that this level of war involves development of national or multinational objectives and the implementation of the instruments of national power to accomplish those objectives (CJCS 2011, xi, 2015, 231). The instruments of national power as defined in *JP 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*; include diplomacy, information, military and economy (CJCS 2013b, I-11-I-14). All of these instruments of national power are a large part of how the strategic level of war is shaped. However, three of the four have a strong relation to Strategic MILDEC and so must be defined as well.

Select Instruments of National Power

The instruments of national power, as they are understood in military doctrine, consist of Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economy, embodied in the abbreviation DIME. These

act as framework for nearly all actions that are taken at the national level by the United States government. For this section it is necessary to look at the definitions of select instruments of national power and how they relate to Strategic Military Deception operations.

Diplomacy

The diplomacy instrument of national power deals with “engaging with other states and foreign groups to advance US values, interests, and objectives, and to solicit foreign support for US military operations” (CJCS 2013b, I-12). This simple definition is genius in its simplicity, flexibility, and the fact that it does not specify the means by which “engaging with other states and foreign groups” is to occur. Another interesting point found in this joint publication’s paragraph detailing this instrument of national power is it states that though the Department of State is the United States government’s lead agency for foreign affairs, it also states that Geographic Combatant Commanders are responsible for aligning military activities with diplomatic activities in their assigned areas of responsibility. This implies that the military not only has role to play in diplomacy, but that they are responsible for that role. This seems to help in nearly eliminating the power the Department of State may have to act as a middle man between the decisions of the Geographic Combatant Commander and the Secretary of Defense.

Personal experience on this idea has proven to be false for the most part. The Department of State’s representative in every country is the ambassador to that country. It is very rare that a military operation gets conducted in a country that the United States has an ambassador in either without the ambassador’s knowledge or consent. More than likely, the reason why diplomacy is listed first in the acronym for the instruments of national power is not just for the convenience of spelling a word with the acronym but it also shows the importance that diplomacy plays in nearly all operations, military or otherwise.

Strategic MILDEC, unlike other levels of MILDEC, plays a part with diplomacy. The genius mentioned earlier behind the definition of diplomacy as an instrument of national power is what gives MILDEC its ability to operate within diplomacy. The stated objective in the definition of “engaging with other states and foreign groups” gives deception operations a place to act nearly without restriction as long as the ends of the operation is “to advance US values, interests, and objectives.”

Information

The next instrument of national power is that of information. Looking back to JP 1 would reveal a somewhat lengthy section discussing the instrument of national power known as information. This paragraph proclaims that in this new age of non-state actors, information has become a key to success (CJCS 2013b, I-12 - I-13). Information has always been important as it often leads to intelligence which is what many if not all operations, military or otherwise, are planned around. Strategic MILDEC is no exception to this. The receipt of information and its translation or acceptance as intelligence is critical to the success of Strategic MILDEC.

Because of this, Strategic MILDEC will also take steps to influence through the information instrument of national power in order to ensure its own success as well as the success of the operation that it is supporting. Daniel and Herbig do a good job of defining and emphasizing this connection to information and intelligence and the success of deception operations. Speaking of these information and intelligence channels they state that “it is the links between deceivers and targets that makes deception possible” (Daniel & Herbig 1982b, 9).

Military

The last instrument of nation power that will be covered for the purposes of relating back to Strategic MILDEC is military. JP 1 gives us a somewhat short definition of this instrument of

national power compared to the discussion submitted with regards to information. However, it is a much more gratifying definition when looked at with regards to Strategic MILDEC. The JP 1 states:

Fundamentally, the military instrument is coercive in nature, to include the integral aspect of military capability that opposes external coercion. Coercion generates effects through the application of force (to include the threat of force) to compel an adversary or prevent our being compelled (CJCS 2013b, I-13).

The connection between Strategic MILDEC and the military instrument of national power is obvious on the surface. The abbreviation for MILDEC is Military Deception and therefore MILDEC inherently falls under the military instrument of national power. It is when focus is placed on Strategic MILDEC that the capability can be expanded outside of the military instrument of national power and to the rest of the instruments. Although Strategic MILDEC does not relate as much to the military instrument of national power due to the focus on ideologies and principles that Strategic MILDEC has, the tactical and operational levels of MILDEC play perfectly into the coercive nature of the military according to Joint Publication (JP) 1.

Strategic MILDEC

JP 3-13.4, Military Deception, takes this definition of the strategic level of war and applies it to MILDEC operations. According to this publication Strategic MILDEC focuses on influencing and changing the behavior of national level decision-makers to convince them to take action or inaction that will support our national objectives and goals (CJCS 2006, I-4). This style of MILDEC sits at the same level as instruments of national power and should be viewed as such. It can be seen from the previous definitions of each of the selected instruments of national power, though the word military is in the acronym. However, when Strategic MILDEC is used

at the strategic level of war, as the name implies, more than the military instrument of national power is being used and influenced.

Low-Intensity Conflict

Low-intensity conflict is a term that has been debated and changed throughout its existence.

Military doctrine, as well as the 1987 National Security Strategy, provides two very similar definitions. The first definition was developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in 1985 and listed low-intensity conflict as:

a limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic, or psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic, or psychosocial pressures through terrorism and insurgency. Low-intensity conflict is generally confined to a geographic area and is often characterized by constraints on the weaponry, tactics, and the level of violence (Dixon 1989, 19).

This definition is probably more applicable now, then it was back when it was written in 1985 by the JCS and the 1987 National Security Strategy.

The last piece of military doctrine to be dedicated to the low-intensity conflict paradigm was FM 100-20 published in December of 1990. This manual stated the definition of low-intensity conflict as:

a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low-intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments (DA & DAF 1990, 1-1; DOD 2011, 11).

Though these definitions differ in verbiage, the general concept is the same. Where the JCS definition specifically states “psychological objectives” and “psychosocial pressures,” FM 100-20’s merely rewards this as “struggles of competing principles and ideologies.” Both are critical

for understanding how Strategic MILDEC can play a part in supporting national objectives within the realm of low-intensity conflict.

Despite the Army losing sight of what is essentially the current and future shape of warfare, the department of defense has not. In fact, there is a position dedicated to low-intensity conflict, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low-intensity Conflict). Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 5111.10, originally published in March of 1995 and subsequently updated in October of 2011, defines the responsibilities, functions, relationships, and authorities of this position as well as provide a definition for low-intensity conflict. This definition has not changed since the directive was published in 1995 and is the same exact definition as the one used in the FM 100-20 of 1990. This shows that the term low-intensity conflict is still a very real concern. Despite the Army losing its vision on low-intensity conflict doctrinally, the definition from FM 100-20 is the one that will be used as it still maintains its presence and legitimacy through the previously mentioned Department of Defense directive.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is one of the most interesting and significant expressions of humanity.

-Phineas Taylor Barnum, Businessman

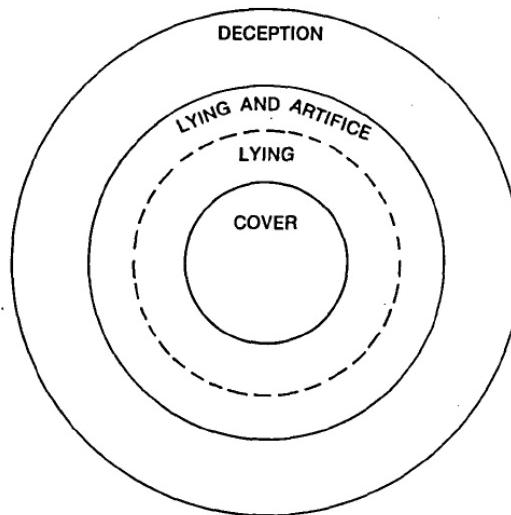
Academia

As the topic of Strategic Military Deception (MILDEC) is not one of significant academic note, it is necessary to focus on the more common factor that makes up the concept of Strategic MILDEC, and that is MILDEC as a whole. The first area that will be looked at is what has been said about MILDEC in academic writings. The following scholarly writings provide excellent vision on deception in theory and a general overview on deception in practice.

Deception in Theory

If MILDEC is to be understood, then the theory of deception must be looked at in academia. First, all of the elements that make up deception must be understood. Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig provide a visual as well as written explanation on what is encompassed within deception:

Figure 1: Diagram on Deception and Its Elements



(Daniel & Herbig 1982a, 156)

From this diagram, it can be seen that there are a variety of subsidiaries within the deception concept. However, the use of deception and all of its elements can be broken down into two categories. Barton Whaley is a name that will come to the mind of those that practice the art and science of military deception. He claims to have developed the first true comprehensive attempt at deception theory (Whaley 1982, 178), claiming that all previous attempts were too narrowly focused. He specifically points to Daniel and Herbig's work when he says this. In Whaley's work "Toward a General Theory of Deception," he likens deception in war to the deception used by magicians. He makes a side-by-side comparison of the two, showing that neither is that much different from the other except with regards to the means and end targets. He focuses primarily on deception as a product of two parts, dissimulation and simulation. He describes dissimulation as "hiding the real" and simulation as "showing the false" (Whaley 1892, 183). Though Whaley claims that Daniel and Herbig's work is too narrow, looking at their work would show an almost exact congruence.

In the Daniel and Herbig work mentioned previously, they describe deception as falling into two different types as well, these are "A-type" and "M-type." A-type is described as an ambiguity-increasing style of deception. This style of deception is meant to keep the target constantly on their toes about what is going on and to prevent the collection of accurate intelligence. A-type deception looks to ensure that "the level of ambiguity always remains high enough to protect the secret of the actual operation" (Daniel & Herbig 1982a, 157). This is similar if not the same as Whaley's dissimulation concept of "hiding the real." Daniel and Herbig cite various sub-operations inside of the main World War II deception operation known as Operation Bodyguard. Many of which were designed to confuse German decision-makers by

portraying the possibility of multiple different invasion points, none of which were the actual invasion points.

The other type of deception that Daniel and Herbig discuss is the M-type deception, also known as ambiguity-decreasing deception. This is meant to influence the target to “concentrate his operational resources on a single contingency, thereby maximizing the deceiver’s chance for prevailing in all others” (Daniel & Herbig 1982a, 158). This is essentially the same as Whaley’s “showing the false.” Daniel and Herbig cite Operation Barbarossa as an example of this kind of deception. This operation was designed to convince the Soviets that the build-up of troops and equipment at the Russian border was nothing more than an exercise in preparation for an attack on Britain (Daniel & Herbig 1982a, 158). Colonel Michael Dewar gives further insight into why this ambiguity-increasing operation was successful. He talks of how propaganda that was pushed out to the German population had an indirect target of the Soviets ensuring them all that the build-up was intended for an attack on Britain. This, coupled with the Russo-German Non-aggression Pact of 1939, was all that was needed to convince the Soviets that these actions were not in preparation for an attack on them (Dewar 1989, 62-64).

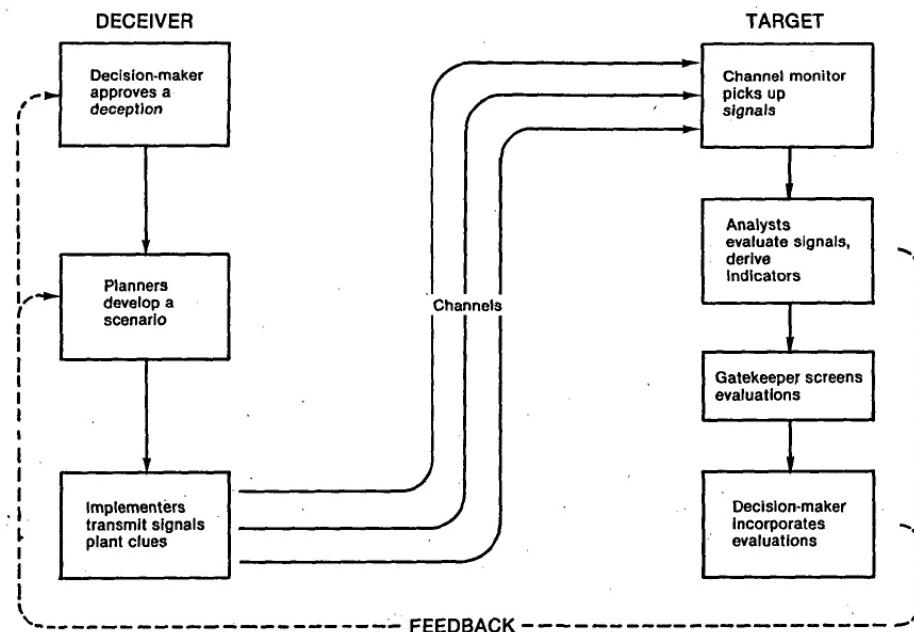
On the border between theory and practice is the concept of the process of a deception operation. J. Bowyer Bell put together an eleven step process to cover the lifespan of a deception operation:

- (1) Deception Planning
- (2) Ruse Construction
- (3) Channeling Selection
- (4) Ruse-Channeled
- (5) The Decision-Arena

- (6) The Illusion is Accepted - the target thus adjusts to the imposed pattern as an aspect of objective reality-acceptance.
- (7) The Target-Response and Response-Spectrum
- (8) The Illusion-Impact - analysis of the feedback is conducted by the deception planner of the target response.
- (9) Decision to respond to feedback
- (10) The Cycle Continued - the deception planner adjusts or maintains the goal.
- (11) Cycle Closed - usually on the revelation or discovery by the target that its perceived reality is an illusion (Bell 2003, 253-254).

Similar in thought but simpler in display, Daniel and Herbig give us an overall glance of the deception process with a flow chart of their own making:

Figure 2: The Process of Deception Flow Chart



(Daniel & Herbig 1982a, 160)

Where these two diverge is not necessarily in how the operation is conducted but what particular steps are emphasized. In his list, Bell does not mention decision makers approving the use of deception as Daniel and Herbig do. However, Daniel and Herbig combine Bell's steps of ruse construction and channel selection into their second step of the planner developing the scenario. Bell also gives a step to the deception being accepted, the deception planner making adjustments based on feedback, and the end of the deception. Although Daniel and Herbig do portray the relay of feedback to the decision maker and deception planner, imply adjustments being made, and a loop-like continuation of the deception operation in their diagram, no visual point is given to the ending.

Deception in Practice

Next, is a look at deception in practice. This will include looking at where deception should be discussed within the planning of operations, deception as a tool during a time of limited resources, effects on intelligence and counter-deception, deception in consideration with non-state actors, and morality factors. MILDEC should start its integration in an operation at the beginning of any operation in which MILDEC is planned on being utilized. Colonel Eugen Anton Popescu's article entitled "The Contribution of Deception to Planning and Carrying Out the Campaign (IV)" professes the idea that MILDEC needs to be considered at all levels of planning (Popescu 2014, 113).

Charlotte L. Rea-Dix says much in her work "Deception: Past Experience – Future Opportunities" to echo this point. In fact, one of the main points of her body of work specifically states that "The deception operations must be properly phased with the supported operation to ensure the deception operation is believable and does not compromise the supported operation" (Rea-Dix 1993, 24). She also makes numerous comments about how the operations she used as

case studies were designed to act as force multipliers to counter a commander's dwindling resources (Rea-Dix 1993, 21). This is just one of many works that speaks to the efficiency of MILDEC. Here, Daniel and Herbig are seen again with their work entitled "Propositions on Military Deception."

In this, they showed a case in which the British put together a small deception in 1943 to convince the German air defense that Berlin was the target instead of a rocket facility. This was done because of the British command's desire to avoid human or material losses (Daniel & Herbig 1982a, 164). Along with this, Daniel and Herbig speak of the factors involved in the possible success of deception. One of the main points they make is the existence of a previous condition or personal predilection held by those being influenced or deceived (Daniel & Herbig 1982a, 163). Daniel and Herbig describe earlier in their work the process of deception. They mention that the first target in the deception process is the "channels" through which the deception must flow in order to reach its ultimate target. These "channels" are the intelligence analysts that collect intelligence for the ultimate target (Daniel & Herbig 1982a, 159). This cognitive concept of an individual's predispositions affecting the success of a deception is also mentioned by Richards J. Heuer Jr. in his paper "Strategic Deception and Counterdeception: A Cognitive Approach."

In this, Heuer Jr. discusses the predispositions that an intelligence analyst unknowingly acting as one of these "channels" has. He states that one of the easiest ways of influencing or deceiving this individual is to reinforce these predispositions (Heuer Jr. 1981, 298). Beyond this, Heuer Jr. goes on to discuss counter-deception and means of conducting better counter-deception. One of the ways he discusses is improved intelligence collection. Heuer Jr. claims that more information being given to an analyst does not increase the accuracy of an analyst in

detecting a deception, but it can increase the individual's self-confidence in their judgments. He also states that though there are, and may be more, enhancements in collection capabilities, the focus should not be primarily on collection but on the analysis of what has been collected (Heuer Jr. 1981, 318).

Heuer Jr.'s views on counter-deception are shared by Paul J. Rossa in his article entitled "The Denial and Deception Challenge to Intelligence." Rossa also believes that although tools for collection are forming with the advancement of technology, the focus still needs to remain on analysis (Rossa 2000, 109). Both of the previously mentioned articles, and their focus on counter-deception, speak in-line with Seth A. Gulsby's article "Strategic Asymmetrical Deception and Its Role in the Current Threat Environment." Although all three of these authors proclaim the importance of counter-deception, Gulsby talks about counter-deception in more modern terms by talking about the need for counter-deception when dealing with non-state actors.

Although he does not specifically mention the group DAESH, he does talk about Al-Qaeda which is the group that DAESH originated from. Gulsby speaks to the concept of Asymmetrical Warfare and that the "weaker" of the two forces involved in Asymmetrical Warfare is more likely to resort to deception thus making the need for counter-deception even more important in an era where low-intensity conflict is the rule than the exception (Gulsby 2010, 67-68). However, Gulsby takes this a step further by accusing non-state of actors using deception because of a "disregard for Law of Land Warfare" (Gulsby 2010, 66). This point is countered, however by John Mattox and his work "The Moral Limitations of Military Deception."

Though Mattox did not write his article in direct refutation of Gulsby's work, he does unknowingly counter Gulsby's argument about non-state actors' disregard for Laws of Land Warfare while using deception by describing exceptions to the Law of Land Warfare with regard to military deception (Mattox 2002, 7). When speaking of the exception Mattox cites the Hague Convention of 1907 which states that "ruses of war and the employment of measures necessary for obtaining information about the enemy and the country are considered permissible" (DA 1956, 13). He also makes use of the Geneva Conventions which state that ruses of war such as camouflage, decoys, mock operations and misinformation are not prohibited because they are to be expected in times of conflict (DA 1979, 28).

Conclusion in Academic Literature

Academia has much more to say about the theory of MILDEC than it does the practice. This may be because a large majority of academics lack the military experience to speak intelligently about actual operations and have only historical references to base information off of. This may also be due to the fact that much of the conduct of MILDEC is withheld in the realm of classified documents. Whatever the case, academia still does a solid job of framing a comprehensive theory of MILDEC that is easy to apply to nearly any operation. It is because of this that we see the creation of more comprehensive military doctrine.

Military Doctrine

Academia is not the only place that has looked at deception. When looking at military deception, military doctrine, and what it has to say about the topic of deception, cannot be ignored. Historically speaking, military deception has existed in a state of flux that almost mimics its use and strength through the history of warfare.

The first mention of deception can be seen in 1905 and the War Department's *Field Service Regulations*, which was amended three years later in 1908. This document actually speaks to the allowance of deception in warfare and its correlation with honorable warfare while cautioning that the common law of war allows for capital punishment if clandestine or treacherous means of harming an enemy are used when it states "while deception in war is permitted as a necessary means of hostility and is consistent with honorable warfare, the common law of war allows even capital punishment for clandestine and treacherous attempts to injure an enemy" (War Department 1908, 200).

Subsequent editions of this document slowly phase out mention of deception. The 1910 edition only mentions deception briefly, saying that if it is desirable then the supreme commander will give the orders to do so (War Department 1910, 76). The 1914 edition does not mention deception in any major sense but speaks of "[deceiving] the enemy in order that he may use as many of his troops as possible" (War Department 1917, 93) when speaking of keeping an enemy in a position by means of offensive measures. Unlike its predecessors, the 1923 edition of this publication gives deception a much larger stake in war-fighting. With a focus on counter information and the element of surprise, this manual seems to almost attempt to mimic the popular quote by Sun Tzu "all warfare is based on deception" (Tzu 1963, 66) when it states "all combat action must be based on the effect of surprise" (War Department 1924, 77). This is also the first time other elements of deception, such as feints and demonstrations, are mentioned as a means of accomplishing surprise.

World War II represented a rather large learning curve for the United States with regards to MILDEC. The previously named Field Service Regulations was renamed as Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Field Service Regulation: Operations* in 1939. There is not much of a difference in

the reference to deception. It is still considered an important portion of the general principles within the conduct of war and still states that “the effect of surprise is dependent upon rapidity of maneuver, the efficiency of counterinformation measures, and the effectiveness of the means employed to deceive the enemy as to our own dispositions and intentions” (War Department 1939, 28-29; 1924, 77). It is also interesting to note that, just as it was stated in previous doctrine, “surprise is sought not only in the initial stage of action and by the larger units but also throughout the action and by units of every echelon of command” (War Department 1939, 77; 1924, 28). This only goes to echo what academia also states with regards to deception needing to be included in planning from the beginning. Amusingly enough, the quote mentioned earlier that nearly duplicated Sun Tzu’s words was modified to read “whenever practicable, combat action should be based upon the effect of surprise” (War Department 1939, 28).

An interesting difference between the 1923 *Field Service Regulations* and the 1939 FM 100-5 is found under the Special Operations chapter. It is here that deception is mentioned outright when it states “the *attack* [emphasis in original] on the enemy is made by surprise obtained by deception and ambush” (War Department 1939, 228). Then, four paragraphs later, it mentions deception aspects again when it says “by feint and demonstration, by changing methods of combat, and by spreading false information, the attacker attempts to mislead the enemy and create conditions which favor surprise” (War Department 1939, 229).

The 1941 edition of FM 100-5 emphasizes counterintelligence and its connections to deception. In fact, there are three paragraphs dedicated to the discussion of deception and its elements such as feints, misinformation, and demonstrations (War Department 1941, 58). Imminent entry into World War II also spawned such doctrine as FM 5-20, *Engineer Field Manual, Camouflage* in 1940. This manual mentioned several methods of concealment such as

hiding, blending, and deceiving (War Department 1940, 3-4). This manual was modified four years later at the height of United States involvement and made even greater mention of deception with inclusion of deception involving sound (War Department 1944, 4).

Deception within doctrine after World War II bounced around in the realm of inadequacy. At one point, a rather poignant manual based on tactical deception was created, but it suffered in what James Monroe called “classified purgatory” (Monroe 2012, 20) until 1978 when FM 90-2, *Tactical Deception* was published. Not long after, the ownership of deception was taken by the Intelligence community and the first doctrinal mention of theory was published, the 1988 edition of FM 90-2, *Battlefield Deception*. This document rightfully refers to “revitalizing the lost art” (DA 1988). This would remain the only manual readily available to the common Soldier for military deception until the publishing of Joint Publication (JP) 3-13.4, *Military Deception* in 2006.

CHAPTER 4: THE LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT AND STRATEGIC MILDEC

We are fighting a low-intensity conflict that is multi-faceted.

- LTG (ret) Ricardo Sanchez, Former Commander of Multi-nation Force- Iraq

The Current and Future Shape of Conflict: Low-intensity Conflict

This section will discuss the finer details of the objectives of the low-intensity conflict paradigm.

To further understand low-intensity conflict, and how it has become the current and future paradigm in which conflict is and will be conducted, it will be necessary to discuss the imperatives and select operational categories in low-intensity conflict. As mentioned before, the last piece of military doctrine that used the term low-intensity conflict was Army Field Manual (FM) 100-20, *Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict*, also known as Air Force Pamphlet (AFP) 3-20. This document set out to establish guidance for the planning, coordinating and execution of operations within low-intensity conflict and as such is a critical reference for the following section.

Imperatives

According to FM 100-20, low-intensity conflict has five imperatives, these are, political dominance, unity of effort, adaptability, legitimacy, and perseverance (DA & DAF 1990, 1-5). These imperatives act as a foundation for the conduct of low-intensity conflict and are applied through the various operational categories in which low-intensity conflict is divided. Each imperative will be discussed along with their relation to the current and future shape of conflict in the coming pages.

The first imperative is political dominance. The political dominance imperative recognizes that operations inside of low-intensity conflict need to take political objectives into consideration when conducting operations (DA & DAF 1990, 1-5). This means that political

implications must be considered before taking action. When dealing with non-state actors, as is often the case in low-intensity conflict, the political backlash that could occur when getting involved in armed conflict on another country's territory must be considered. Strong and consistent interagency communication with organizations such as the Department of State and its ambassador in the host nation not only can reduce this political backlash but may also help leverage political dominance to assist in operations. This kind of cooperation ties directly in with the next imperative, unity of effort.

The second imperative, unity of effort, goes on to emphasize the interagency cooperation spoken about earlier. However, it goes beyond just a focus on political initiatives. Unity of effort also requires planners to look at initiatives that are economic and psychological in nature as well. This focus on the psychological initiatives is what also brings another connection between low-intensity conflict and MILDEC (DA & DAF 1990, 1-5). As Barton Whaley and Heuer stated in both of their works, MILDEC is a type of psychology in one form or another whether it be Applied Psychology or Cognitive Psychology, respectively (Whaley 1982, 179, Heuer 1981, 294).

The third imperative of adaptability is one that is nothing new within the scheme of all things military. Like any other type of operation that deals with people as targets, whether it involves direct action missions or low-intensity conflicts that require the consideration of psychological and political factors, there needs to be an ability to change or modify the methods or techniques in order to accomplish maximum effectiveness. However, this is more important in low-intensity conflict than any other. Because of the ever changing environment, techniques, and lack of resources held by many of the parties involved in low-intensity conflict it is even more critical to be able to adjust one's methods.

This does not necessarily mean that operations are confined to currently existing methods either. Sometimes adaptability will force individuals and groups to invent new ways to conduct operations. The United States Army has been doing this since the introduction of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and Vehicle Born IEDs (VBIED). These new methods of attack from non-state actor groups like Al-Qaeda and DAESH forced the United States military to invent new means of protecting their troops. This included but was not limited to new vehicles, techniques, and tactics.

The fourth imperative is legitimacy. The imperative of legitimacy is another one that is critical to the concept of low-intensity conflict, especially in the modern era. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars have shown us that legitimacy within the population for anyone that is going to come to their country is a must. The insurgency groups that have acted in both of these countries did so in a way that was aimed at undercutting or diminishing the legitimacy of the pre-existing government. When the population begins to doubt its own government, it stops relying on that government for its needs and resorts to its own means of procuring what it feels it needs to sustain a way of life. This breeds an environment that is ideal for the development and growth of an insurgency. Field Manual (FM) 100-20 makes a very sobering point when it states that popular vote does not always indicate legitimacy, nor is legitimacy something that can be created. It is something can only be encouraged and sustain through action (DA & DAF 1990 1-6).

One must not mistakenly assume that the idea of encouraging and maintaining legitimacy only applies to those directly involved with the population. It is also important for any party that intends on having an effect in a low-intensity conflict, directly or indirectly, to do its best to maintain a high level of legitimacy. This not only helps support their operations in the country,

but also the operations of anyone else they support or that supports them. Perhaps if the United States government had spent more time looking at encouraging a higher degree of legitimacy for the incoming presence of its military, there may have been less need for casualties on both sides during the initial phases of both the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns.

The fifth and final imperative for low-intensity conflict is perseverance. This imperative acts as both a guideline for conduct in low-intensity conflict and also a warning. Unlike in previous conflicts that involved massive armies and a series of decisive battles that would lead to progress and eventually victory, low-intensity conflict involves drawn out conflicts that have no clear beginning or end (DA & DAF 1990, 1-6). For the past styles of warfare, long-term objectives that would span many years without significant results were unacceptable. However, when you are dealing with ideologies and ideas, and not with economics and numbers, results are often difficult to quantifiably measure. Impressing upon a commander the perseverance imperative is a means of hopefully convincing them to reject short-term successes in favor of operations that will assist in completing long-term objectives.

The accomplishment of all of these imperatives inside of low-intensity conflict makes up a style of war that allows for conflict conducted in such a way that minimizes the use of personnel, the results of casualties, and the use of materiel. When there is more action and consideration taken in the political domain, there is less direct action and kinetic missions that occur. This means one to three people from each state concerned within a conflict negotiating and talking about issues instead of tens of thousands of people needlessly fighting for reason they may not even be fully aware of.

Select Operational Categories

Low-intensity conflict consists of four operational categories. These include support for insurgency and counterinsurgency, combatting terrorism, peacekeeping operations, and peacetime contingency operations. The only categories of concern for this paper will be the first two as they are the most relevant to the current and future state of conflict. Though these are two separately discussed categories, a low-intensity conflict operation could, at any time, involve both of these categories. This makes comprehension of the difference between the two critical to a proper understanding of low-intensity conflict and its place as the current and future state of conflict.

Support for insurgency and counterinsurgency is a category of low-intensity conflict in which the United States has taken part in more than a few times in the last fifty years with involvement in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf. With the introduction and growing power of non-state actors, the United States continues to work within this category. When supporting an insurgency, proper leadership is key. This individual needs to be well versed in the population's unrest with the organization for which the insurgency is attempting to counter. The United States armed forces may act as combatants, but are typically confined to training and advising roles as well as logistical support (DA & DAF 1990, 2-15).

With regards to Counterinsurgency (COIN), FM 100-20 speaks to this using a strategy known as the Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) Strategy. This concept is based on the successful integration of both military and civilian systems in order to provide security and the opportunity for development to help combat the unrest that an insurgency aims to arouse within a population (DA & DAF 1990, 2-7 - 2-8). This utilizes all of the instruments of national power. By utilizing and regulating information channels, COIN operations can separate the insurgency from the population psychologically. Political and economic programs help to increase the

legitimacy of the existing government to help delegitimize the claims made by the insurgency.

Military might is used to help provide security and protection for those conducting all forms of operations previously mentioned.

The principles that make up this category include unity of effort, maximum use of intelligence, minimum use of violence, and a responsive government (DA & DAF 1990, 2-9). When the armed forces role is discussed, it speaks of supporting counterinsurgency operations chiefly through Intelligence, Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and deception as well as others (DA & DAF 1990, 2-14). Even if these actions are prescribed to be conducted by the security forces of the affected nation, it still shows the part that deception has to play in yet another part of the low-intensity conflict paradigm.

As for the United States' role within counterinsurgency, there is mention of the role of acting as trainers and advisors. The mission of trainers is to "transfer military skill" and involves "fairly direct application of US doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures" (DA & DAF 1990, 2-19). A justification for training host nation counterparts in deception can be found in JP 3-24, Counterinsurgency. This publication repeatedly mentions deception operations that may be conducted by an insurgency (CJCS 2013a, II-15, III-10, V-5, VII-3).

Also, again, there is mention of PSYOP whose goal is "development of favorable emotions, attitudes, or behavior in neutral, friendly, or hostile foreign groups" (DA & DAF 1990 2-22). The leadership for these groups will exploit issues seen as critical to the disaffected population in order to damage the legitimacy of the existing government while offering some sort of alternative to improve conditions. However, solidification of these potential programs requires support from many politically connected people (DA & DAF 1990, 2-1).

The second operational category to look at under low-intensity conflict is combatting terrorism, known more modernly as counterterrorism (CT). This goes nearly hand-in-hand with COIN in today's modern conflicts. FM 100-20, again, is the key reference point for understanding this as well as Joint Publication (JP) 3-26, *Counterterrorism*. As a whole, terrorists operate inside of a fear and harm paradigm. The fear portion of this paradigm involves acts of recognition, coercion, intimidation, provocation, and support for insurgencies (DA & DAF 1990, 3-3). These are typically the tactics used on a political and psychological level against the population the terrorist group is trying to gain control over.

On the harm side are the tactics such as bombing, arson, hostage-taking, kidnapping, murder and raids. These are not necessarily always aimed at the population being influenced but also at those that would help the population or the existing government. To combat terrorism, FM 100-20 recommends the creation of a national program dedicated to combatting terrorism. The primary functions of this organization would be intelligence, security, and information (DA & DAF 1990, 3-9).

The intelligence aspect is critical to collecting key information to help counter terrorist plans, recruitment, and support as a whole. Security provides the basic protection needed to help counter the harm portion of the fear and harm paradigm mentioned earlier. This removes one of the two fundamentals needed for the success of terrorist organizations. The last function, information, helps to counteract the fear fundamental needed by terrorist organizations. Here there is mention, again, of PSYOP. With regard to PSYOP's potential, FM 100-20 states that "PSYOP can contribute immensely to an offensive strategy. It can help avoid collateral damage to the general populace. A well-planned and executed program puts the terrorist on the defensive psychologically" (DA & DAF 1990, 3-10). Leadership in these groups generally define policy

and direct actions, are intensely committed, and may be charismatic (DA & DAF 1990, 3-5). This makes their influence on not only the affected population important but also their influence over their subordinates just as critical.

Making the Connection

When dealing with any level of MILDEC, you are dealing with shaping the behaviors of those individuals that are being targeted for the MILDEC operation. This implies that MILDEC operations aim to affect the ideologies and principles of the competing nation or group. To accomplish this there are psychological objectives and principles that need to be considered. However, it is not enough to only affect the individual or even small samples of the population. This, at best, only produces a nearly unmeasurable impact on the country's actions as a whole. If you are to successfully sway the ideologies and principles of a nation, you must deal with changing those tenants at their source. That source is usually those leaders at the strategic level.

Whether it is widely accepted or not, a state's military, popular ideologies, and principles are significantly affected by the ideologies and principles of its strategic level leadership. This is done through laws and policy changes. Depending on the charisma of the leader, this may take years or could take only months. An influential and charismatic leader could leverage certain world events to convince an entire nation to go to war as Franklin Delano Roosevelt did leading up to the United States' involvement in World War II. Though it would be fool hardy to state the absolute that every citizen of the United States fully supported involvement in World War II, it is safe to say, based on the history that is available, that the vast majority of the United States population supported getting involved even before the bombing on Pearl Harbor.

This is why targeting the strategic level leadership utilizing a psychological objective is critical. This is especially true when dealing with non-state actors. In his work "Military

Deception and the Non-State Actor,” Lieutenant Commander James K. Hansen corroborates this when he says “once the type of organizational structure is determined and the key decision makers are identified, the operational commander must decide how those leaders can be influenced. It is through the channels of influence that the commander and his staff have the best chance of conducting a successful deception operation against the adversary.” (Hansen 2008, 11-12).

Imperatives

In looking for additional connections between Strategic MILDEC and low-intensity conflict, there is much to be found within the very imperatives that guide low-intensity conflict. The political dominance imperative speaks of leveraging political objectives during all points in a conflict. When you are dealing with MILDEC at the strategic level of war, you are dealing with political objectives. The political figurehead is more than likely the end target of a strategic level military deception. Therefore, using Strategic Military Deception as a tool inside of low-intensity conflict keeps the operations of the conflict in line with the very first imperative that FM 100-20 states should be applied in all four low-intensity conflict operational categories.

Unity of effort is yet another shining example of the connection of Strategic MILDEC as a tool inside of low-intensity conflict. There is, in all likelihood, not a single Strategic MILDEC operation that was conducted solely by one organization. The complexity of MILDEC is both in its ability to keep itself unknown and in the diverse planning and interagency cooperation that is required to complete one. Though not all members involved in the planning are privy to all parts of the plan, agencies both military and civilian alike have played a part in many MILDECs over the years. Rea-Dix put it best when she said “Unity of effort both vertical – from the highest civilian and military authorities down to the lowest levels – and horizontal – across joint,

combined, or other agency lines – is critical to ensure proper execution and security of the operation” (Rea-Dix 1993, 24).

Because of the vast array of those involved, some unknowingly assisting in the deception and others not, there is a potential for a MILDEC to not go as planned. A prime example of this was Operation Mincemeat. This operation was designed by the British military and involved the dumping of a dead body into the ocean with forged sensitive documents that would eventually wash ashore in a country that was known to support Germany in World War II. It was intended that the body would be found as well as the documents and that the contents of the documents would be passed along through the proper channels to Adolf Hitler. These documents would hopefully convince Hitler that Operation Husky, which would prove to be the invasion of Sicily, was actually going to involve the invasion of Greece instead.

However, when the body washed ashore it was taken into the hands of the wrong authorities, who then attempted to return the body to the British military as soon as possible. This is where the adaptability factor came in to play. Those informed of the deception immediately intercepted the authorities retaining the body and attempted to make the retrieval of the body seem trivial and unimportant. This gave the intended intelligence target enough time to find the body, make copies of the documents, and hence unknowingly prove the deception successful. This quick thinking and change in conduct falls directly in line with the adaptability imperative of low-intensity conflict.

Perhaps the largest connection between low-intensity conflict and strategic MILDEC can be found inside of the legitimacy imperative. To have legitimacy with a person, population, or group, the things you do and say must be believable. This also must be true if a deception is to be successful (Rea-Dix 1993, 24). Inside of a low-intensity conflict, if an organization or state

can encourage a degree of legitimacy about channels of information as being credible, when that particular channel “leaks” information, the success of the MILDEC increases greatly and when a MILDEC is successful, the operation it supports is successful. This building of legitimacy is not something that needs to be done over time either, when it comes to MILDEC.

Looking back at Operation Mincemeat we can see legitimacy packaged into one dead body. The body that was dumped with the fictitious sensitive documents was also dumped with a number of other objects and “pocket litter” that would lend credibility and legitimacy to the character and identity of the body. These things included a ticket stub from a movie theater, receipts from various stores, and other personal belongings that one may have in their pocket and forget are there. This essentially gave the body and the deception a small package of legitimacy to help along the operation.

Lastly, looking at the perseverance imperative, there is another connection between the use of Strategic Military Deception (MILDEC) inside of low-intensity conflict. Although MILDEC operations can prove to have immediate results in some regards, MILDEC conducted at the strategic level plays out over long periods of time and involves numerous smaller operations. As you will see later in this thesis, one of the most well-known Strategic MILDECs during the second World War known as Operation Bodyguard had over twenty different sub-operations that happened at various places over a large span of time. The amount of patience and perseverance that was put into the planning and conduct of these operations is a massive undertaking that dealt with matters in both the military and political domain as well as international and interagency cooperation. Because these smaller operations within Operation Bodyguard were meant to protect Operation Overlord, which was the landing at Normandy, the

ultimate success of these operations would not be known until the outcome of Overlord could be seen.

Select Operational Categories

When looking at the operational categories, we continue to see connections between low-intensity conflict and MILDEC. All four of the principles that are contained within counterinsurgency (COIN) tie directly to the use of MILDEC. As discussed before, MILDEC inherently requires a massive amount of interagency cooperation that is synonymous with not only the low-intensity conflict imperative, but also the unity of effort principle found within COIN. Maximization of intelligence is also another critical point of congruence between the two. The effective use of intelligence within MILDEC, especially at the strategic level, is crucial to not only the initial planning of a Strategic MILDEC but the continuation and adaptation of a MILDEC. If used properly and in the right capacity, MILDEC can provide its planners and operators with the minimum use of violence that is also desired within the principles of COIN.

To make this connection even more meaningful, there is the mention of the use of deception by the armed forces of the affected state. However, this is not to say that the United States is incapable of conducting deception operations within the affected state. When looking at what the United States' role is in support of COIN, there is a two-fold opportunity for MILDEC. First, United States forces are expected to act as trainers to their host nation counterparts. Trainers are to use United States military doctrine to train individuals on United States doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures. Since deception is expected of the affected nation's armed forces, it stands to reason that US trainers would have an opportunity to train their counterparts on MILDEC tactics, techniques, and procedures.

However, MILDEC is not confined to training alone. The mention of PSYOP being conducted by United States forces towards neutral and hostile foreign groups gives leeway for the conduct of MILDEC against the leadership and lower level members of insurgency groups. Although in current doctrine the two are considered separate information related capabilities under jurisdiction of Information Operations (IO), the 1994 edition of Joint Publication (JP) 3-58 speaks of the multitude of similarities between PSYOP and MILDEC (CJCS 1994, II-2 – II-3).

When looking at Strategic MILDEC, targeting the leadership is key. Within COIN the leadership is the cornerstone for the continued discontent felt by the masses that fuels the insurgency to continue. Though these leaders may not be sitting at what is considered a traditional strategic level of war, they are sitting at the strategic level within the confines of COIN. Therefore, utilizing PSYOP to influence the behavior and attitude of a member of a hostile group, such as the leadership of an insurgency, lends strategic MILDEC a critical place in COIN operations.

The connections between counterterrorism (CT) and MILDEC rely heavily on CT's reliance on information operations. When looking at JP 3-26, *Counterterrorism*, it directly mentions the use of MILDEC when it says "military deception should be applied to CT operations as a means to influence extremists, their supporters, and the mainstream populace" (CJCS 2014, x, V-6). This is not the only link, however. In looking at intelligence, the information that is collected about the leadership in a terrorist group is critical to countering terrorism by understanding the leadership, how they receive information, and how they may or may not react to a deception. Rea-Dix also spoke of this when she spoke of the allies knowing prior to planning how and where Hitler thought they might attack (Rea-Dix 1993, 6-7).

Information that is obtained through intelligence channels could mean the success or failure of any objective, but this applies more for MILDEC and operations within low-intensity conflict than others, especially when it comes to the “leader profiling” that Rea-Dix described. Since the leadership within the framework of a terrorist group is so crucial to the policies, actions, and beliefs its subordinates and potentially the population it operates in, they are seen as strategic level targets and are therefore prime targets for a strategic level MILDEC to assist within the low-intensity conflict paradigm.

Selected Historical Cases

While there are many cases of deception throughout history, there are not many that can be seen as Strategic MILDEC. The following case studies will be presented with their backgrounds and an accompanying analysis as to how that particular instance of MILDEC falls within the realm of low-intensity conflict.

The American Revolution

The American Revolution contains one of the first cases of Military Deception (MILDEC) being used in American warfare. It also happens that it involves the first case of Strategic MILDEC. Although George Washington is lauded as a man who “cannot tell a lie” he is also renowned for his deception operations during the American Revolution. The most well-known case of Washington’s deception operations occurred towards the end of major operations just outside of New York.

Background. In the spring of 1780, General Charles Cornwallis and his superior Henry Clinton brought a large force from Britain to conduct a campaign in the south in the state of South Carolina. This was all to lay siege to the city of Charleston for a second time. This second siege resulted in the defeat of Benjamin Lincoln’s Continental forces. It was at this point that Clinton

told Cornwallis to maintain the grain by keeping Charleston, South Carolina. He was also instructed to not take any offensive action until Charleston was secured. With this, Clinton left Cornwallis with a modest amount of troops with which to not only keep Charleston but to also eventually move north. Clinton did this under the assumption that Cornwallis would be able to recruit Loyalists that Clinton also assumed were living in the southern colonies in large numbers.

Despite the lack of loyalists, Cornwallis was able to win several small victories that would lead him to slowly working his way north into Virginia. By December of 1780, the Colonial army was split between Clinton in the north in New York and Cornwallis in the South in Virginia. Wedged in between were George Washington and his collection of three thousand and five hundred troops paling in comparison to Clinton's ten thousand troops or more (Morrill 1993, 177). Knowing that he was low on resources and men, it was at this point that Washington began his strategic level military deception against Clinton.

It began with Washington directing the construction of ovens for the baking of bread and repairs on the roads that would supposedly lead them to an attack on New York by way of Staten Island (Seelye 1893, 295). Attempting to collect intelligence on Clinton and effectively conduct the “leader profiling” that was mentioned previously, Washington sent out false “top secret” documents which stated that Washington was planning an attack on New York with every duty-worthy Soldier in the middle states. This was all in an attempt to get a better understanding of Clinton’s intentions and capabilities. Watching closely and patiently, Washington noticed Clinton beginning to fortify and settle in New York. Realizing the ruse had been successful, he left a small group of troops in New Jersey while he and Count d Rochambeau began their travel southward (Groh 1969, 128).

Near the beginning of the fall of 1781 over seventeen thousand American and French troops converged on Williamsburg, Virginia more than doubling the eight thousand and three hundred British troops in Yorktown. Upon noticing this, Cornwallis immediately requested additional troops from Clinton, which he sent as quickly as weather and time would allow. Much to the dismay of Cornwallis, this was not enough time. The timely and effective deception that Washington had conducted gave himself and Rochambeau the element of surprise and enough time to lay siege on Cornwallis at Yorktown starting October 9th (Morrill 1993, 182) causing Cornwallis to surrender on October 17th signing the actual articles of capitulation on October 19th (Lengel 2005, 342).

Analysis. This is the first major strategic level military deception in United States history and remains one of significant note. With regards to the imperatives of low-intensity conflict there is the unity of effort that is made between Washington and French officer Rochambeau. Without this, Washington would have surely failed. The adaptability of this operation can be seen with Washington's change in plans upon seeing Clinton's reaction to the false "top secret" plans that Washington allowed to be taken which spoke of an attack on New York. The seeming inevitability of an attack on New York, as well as the ovens and road repairs directed by Washington, went to solidify the legitimacy of the false documents. Lastly for the imperatives, despite the limited amount of troops, as well as the impending loss of even more come the end of the year when enlistments would end, Washington still pursued with deception and this deception persevered through the long march down to Virginia and through the battle of Williamsburg to ensure the success of the attack on Yorktown.

In this deception, we see intelligence gathering being done in what Daniel and Herbig would have described as an M-type deception as Washington led Clinton to believe that the only

option possible was that Washington was going to attack New York from New Jersey. This example is one that shows military deception in support of what would be considered insurgency. The people of the United States felt that their government, Britain, was taxing them without representation. This led to the leaders, of what would become the American insurgency, to focus on these issues in order to strengthen the unrest caused by the taxation. By offering the attractive alternative of independence and bringing the continental army to war with Britain, the founding fathers successfully conducted an insurgency and within it Washington found use for one of the first American examples of Strategic MILDEC.

World War II

No discussion about MILDEC, especially Strategic MILDEC, is complete without discussion involving not only one of the most well-known periods for the use of deception operations but also the most well-known deception operation in United States history, World War II and Operation Fortitude.

Background. Near the end of the European campaign in World War II an invasion of Western Europe was inevitable. The only questions that remained were how and where the Allied forces would attack. In the end, the decision was made that Normandy would be the location of the assault and the date was to be June 6, 1944, code named Operation Overlord. In an effort to make the invasion as effective as possible, Allied forces looked toward a Strategic MILDEC that was code named Operation Bodyguard to protect the information regarding this invasion. Though Operation Bodyguard had more than 35 sub-operations (Donovan 2002, 3), it had four main deception plans (Dewar 1989, 70; Hesketh 1949, 46-48). Each plan played a major role in keeping German leadership focused on anything and everything but Normandy.

Operation Zeppelin was designed to keep German troops occupied in the Balkans before the invasion. Operation Ironside was intended to keep German troops tied down in Bordeaux during the first three weeks of the invasion. Operation Vendetta was used to keep the German troops that were already in Southern France away from the beaches of Normandy prior to the invasion as reconnaissance and preparation was being done. Operation Fortitude was designed to convince German leadership that the invasion at Normandy was a ruse and that the real invasion would occur at Norway and at the Pas de Calais in France. This section will focus on the last of these four.

Operation Fortitude was broken up into two different parts, Fortitude North and Fortitude South. Fortitude North was focused on the false invasion of Norway. It involved the use of BBC broadcasts, references made in British newspapers, and other wireless communications. However, postwar studies of German records gives little to no proof of these communications having an impact (Daniel & Herbig 1982b, 228). The big success of Fortitude North was the visit of Air Vice-Marshal Henry Thornton to Sweden to discuss with Swedish government officials the invasion of Norway. Thornton's status as the former Air Attaché to Sweden made his visit to the Swedish General Bengt Nordenskiöld an important piece of information that was sure to be leaked to and believed by the German government.

In fact, this leak was easier accomplished than planned. The Swedish Chief of Police was pro-German and had the General's office fitted with hidden recording devices that captured the conversation. After, this conversation was distilled into a report that was relayed to Hitler who immediately reinforced his troops in Norway with thirty thousand more troops (Dewar 1989, 72). Despite evidence describing the ineffectiveness of the wireless messaging aspects of

Fortitude North, the deception was still a rousing success as evident by the more than two hundred thousand troops that remained in Norway for the invasion that would never come.

The second part, Fortitude South, dealt with the false invasion at the Pas de Calais in France. This was accomplished by the success of two major components, the fictitious unit known as the First United States Army Group (FUSAG) and the Double Cross System. Though the FUSAG was a fake unit, it was commanded by a very real and well-known commander, General George S. Patton. Patton's success earlier in the war helped to solidify the legitimacy of the FUSAG in the eyes of the Germans. This mix of Canadian, British, and American units started with real troops and equipment, but as the day of the Normandy landing drew closer, the real units were pulled back and replaced with rubber tanks, guns, and vehicles. Equally important were the actions of and information about this unit was relayed by agents that were a part of the Double Cross System. This system had agents that would voluntarily give false information to German intelligence agents under the guise of being pro-German.

In fact, according to evidence gained after the war, the belief in the existence and actions of the FUSAG and the success that it brought was due solely to the messages of three British double agents known only as Garbo, Brutus and Tricycle (Hesketh 1949, 92). This was a stunning success which not only kept German troops away from Normandy prior to the invasion, but was also kept Hitler from believing that the Normandy invasion was real and German troops out of Normandy for nearly seven weeks after the invasion actually occurred (Handel 1987, 117-118).

Analysis. Fortitude is a consummate example of Strategic MILDEC operating within the imperatives of low-intensity conflict. Because this was a strategic level deception, unity of effort was crucial. Although the majority of the plans for Bodyguard, which contained Fortitude, were

confined to the London Controlling Section (Dewar 1989, 70) there was still a massive amount of collaboration between American and British organizations both civilian and military alike. The two separate operations within Fortitude as well as the time span that Fortitude covered, speaks to the adaptability and perseverance of this operation. Legitimacy was another imperative that was used to its fullest potential in both Fortitude North and Fortitude South. The legitimacy given to Thornton because of his former position as the Air Attaché to Sweden gave greater success to Fortitude North, whereas the fame and success of General Patton earlier in the war gave legitimacy to the FUSAG in Fortitude South.

In looking at the description given to the actions and activity conducted by terrorist as defined earlier in this chapter, the Third Reich and Hitler's regime could easily be defined as a state directed terrorist group. Their raids on the homes of its Jewish population, use of gas chambers in Auschwitz camps, as well as the bombing and seizure of land and property of neighboring countries all fall in line with the actions described in FM 100-20 as terrorist tactics. Because of this, Fortitude can effectively be looked at a Strategic MILDEC in support of counterterrorism (CT) operations.

Vietnam War

Background. The Vietnam War gives an example of MILDEC that was not as successful as it could have been. In 1964, in the middle of the Vietnam War, the Commander United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (COMUSMACV) directed the activation of a unit known as the Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group (MACVSOG). Initially it was created to provide training and advising to Vietnamese counterparts in South Vietnam (SACSA 1970a, A-18). This restricted mission statement did not allow the MACVSOG to directly conduct unconventional operations. OPLAN 34A called for

the creation of resistance groups in Northern Vietnam in order to help counter North Vietnamese operations (SACSA 1970b, C-a-7). The MACVSOG made two efforts to have a plan approved for the creation of these groups of resistance in 1965 and 1966 (SACSA 1970b, C-a-7 – C-a-12). Both were disapproved at various levels in Washington.

In 1968, the MACVSOG made one last redesign to this plan. Instead of the resistance group being an actual group created and controlled by members of the Vietnamese population going against the North Vietnamese government, they would create a fictitious insurgency group that would take actions that would cause the North Vietnamese government to question the benefit of supporting actual insurgency groups (SACSA 1970b, C-a-13). This plan would come to fall under the new psychological operations program within the MACVSOG, given the codename Project Humidor (SACSA 1970b, C-a-1).

The group that would be created would be named the Sacred Swords Patriot League (SSPL). This group supposedly consisted primarily of “dissident, nationalistic Vietnamese striving to free their beleaguered country from the grip of all who oppress her” (SACSA 1970b, C-a-14) operating in Northern Vietnam. The SSPL saw the Vietnam War as a conflict between communists and capitalist that did nothing more than harm the people of Vietnam. Their missions included halting the US bombing of the Vietnamese people, removal of all Northern Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam, and the departure of all foreign troops from Vietnam. Their focus was largely nationalistic, supported unification, and deeply opposed the fratricidal nature of the Vietnam War.

The SSPL conducted various operations. Leaflets, posters, and radio broadcasts were just some of these. They also conducted maritime operations. One such operation involved the capture of Vietnamese fishermen (SACSA 1970b, C-a-40). While held captive by the SSPL at

the Paradise Island facility, they were interrogated, indoctrinated, and made to perform small labor tasks such as making needle, thread, twine, and chopsticks all which were given as packaged gifts to the fishermen when they were released (SACSA 1970b, C-a-62). However, the ultimate goal was not indoctrination or manual labor. The true goal was the establishment of legitimacy for the organization and to instill in the North Vietnamese government and its people that a credible resistance was alive and active in Northern Vietnam (SACSA 1970b, C-a-62).

Ultimately, the plan involving this notional group did not accomplish its goal of reducing the North Vietnamese government's support to insurgencies (Monroe 2012, 125). However, it did cause the North Vietnamese government see deception operations as much more of a threat than before (SACSA 1970b, C-a-129).

Analysis. Though not a completely successful one, the MACVSOG deception gives an example of MILDEC as conducted under the low-intensity conflict operational category of counterinsurgency. Even inside of a MILDEC that failed in its primary goal, there is still evidence of connections to low-intensity conflict. Looking at the imperatives, we see the political dominance imperative playing a massive role at the very beginning of the deception. The considerations that were given to the political ramifications of the second of the first two recommendations for the structure of this operation led to it being disapproved and rewritten again (SACSA 1970b, C-a-12). The unity of effort imperative came in to play on several occasions. The first was during the approval process. The creators of the plan sent the operation for input by the CIA (SACSA 1970b, C-a-9). Unity of effort could also be seen in cooperation between ground troops and maritime troops with the conduct of maritime operations involving the capture of Vietnamese fishermen.

Another imperative seen is legitimacy. Referring, again, back to the operation involving the capture of the fishermen, there is an effort to create legitimacy for the SSPL. This may have very well been one of the reasons why this deception did not accomplish its primary goal. In looking back at FM 100-20 it states that “no group or force can create legitimacy for itself, but it can encourage and sustain legitimacy by its actions” (DA & DAF 1990, 1-6). Since this organization did not exist prior to its creation by the MACVSOG, there was no level of legitimacy to encourage or sustain. Other factors that could have played into the failure to obtain its primary objective could be the contradiction within the concept of the maritime operations. The organization was one that professed freedom and safety for the people of Vietnam, especially from the threats being brought about by the Vietnam War. The capture, attempted indoctrination, and use for manual labor of these individuals directly contradicts that ideal, regardless of whether or not the products of that manual labor were given to the individuals upon release.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

As of the writing of this paper, the war on terror still continues. On a regular basis the United States and its military are met with the constant challenges that make up low-intensity conflict. Organizations like Al-Qaeda and DAESH show no signs of giving up. The operational categories described above of supporting insurgency, counterinsurgency, and counterterrorism are types of conflicts that the United States has been dealing with since the American Revolution but are more obvious today with the emergence and continued existence of non-state actors. The United States, as well as the rest of the world, is dealing with the paradigm of low-intensity conflict as the primary means of conducting conflict and will be doing so for many years to come. Because of this, the United States Department of Defense needs to take a hard look at using all of its tools to their maximum potential.

The historical case studies presented not only show the long standing existence of the concept of low-intensity conflict, but also the successful use of strategic MILDEC inside of that concept. George Washington and the American Revolution show a case in which strategic MILDEC aimed at the right target can affect the target of the deception as well as the target of a kinetic operation. Operation Fortitude during World War II gave a shining example of a very successful military deception when conducting counterterrorism operations on a grand scale. Fortitude also showed just how well MILDEC correlates in the low-intensity conflict imperatives.

All of the imperatives crucial to low-intensity conflict are also crucial to MILDEC, especially MILDEC conducted at the strategic level. The MACVSOG deception in the Vietnam War gives an example of MILDEC inside of the counterinsurgency operational category as well

as a much more solid example of MILDEC covering several of the low-intensity conflict imperatives of political dominance, unity of effort, and legitimacy. Despite the legitimacy imperative hampering success in the primary goal of this deception operation, the operation itself still gave MILDEC a more dangerous name within the US strategy, especially in the eyes of Hanoi (SACSA 1970b, C-a-129).

So the question has been answered. Strategic MILDEC has historically been and will continue to be a crucial tool for operations inside of low-intensity conflict and with low-intensity conflict being the current style of warfare and remaining so for the foreseeable future, it is crucial that this tool be kept just as sharp as the rest. As Daniel and Herbig put it “military deception is likely to occur if a nation maintains an apparatus to plan and organize deception, or if its military preserves, passes on, or at least debates a doctrine for deception. Conversely, nations having no such apparatus or doctrine, or which allow them to atrophy, must overcome the inertia involved in creating or revivifying them” (Daniel & Herbig 1982b, 14).

Policy Recommendations

As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, military deception is currently considered an asset under the jurisdiction of information operations and hence under the command of the First Information Operations Command as an information related capability (IRC). While semantically this makes sense, policy wise and operationally, this is not the case. While there is an appreciation for the use of military deception by conventional forces, it is more operationally sound to have MILDEC fall under the command and control of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Though USSOCOM is a military body that is represented by more than just the Army, as of the writing of this paper United States Army Special

Operations Forces (ARSOF) are the only entity to produce a comprehensive plan looking forward into the development of its force and its capabilities. ARSOF 2022 is that plan.

ARSOF 2022 is described as “a blueprint for change. It describes precepts and imperatives that will enable ARSOF to thrive in a future operating environment that is characterized by uncertainty” (USASOC 2014a, 3). A quick reading of this document will show that Special Operation Forces (SOF), as mentioned in the introduction, are more suited for the conduct of low-intensity conflict. The proposed future of ARSOF focuses on the very same operational categories found in low-intensity conflict, Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism (USASOC 2014a, 11; 2014b, 16).

A look at the *Special Warfare* journal that is produced by the SOF community shows the core SOF attributes that are looked for in every Soldier that goes through the qualification and selection process of any SOF element. These attributes include perseverance, stating that a SOF Soldier will work towards an end, adaptability, professing a SOF Soldier’s ability to “maintain composure while responding to or adjusting one’s own thinking and actions to fit a changing environment,” and being a team player, which enables a SOF Soldier to “work on a team for a greater purpose than himself” (USAJFKSWCS 2010, 5). These SOF core attributes fall directly in line with the low-intensity conflict imperatives of perseverance, adaptability and unity of effort, respectively. Even the Department of Defense recognized this connection when they combined the “overall supervision of Special Operations and Low-intensity Conflict activities within the Department of Defense” (DOD 2011, 2) under one position.

The issue is that doctrine and policy place Special Operations assets such as PSYOP and MILDEC under Information Operations. Capabilities such as these are under the direct command and control of Special Operations, and rightfully so. One of the most highly regarded

courses that train planners in Military Deception was created by a member of the Special Operations community. It is in the Special Operations community that this program is maintained, at the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS). The majority of MILDEC operations are conducted by members of the Special Operations community. The issue is not operational, it is strategic.

The current command and control structure involving Special Operations is more conducive to the successful conduct of operations. It has the adaptability to change with the operational environment. This is not to say that SOF is without its flaws. Even *ARSOF 2022* states that SOF somewhat suffers from command and control issues (USASOC 2014a, 22). However, as of the writing of this thesis, many of the solutions put forth in that document have already been implemented just two years after recommendation. This goes to show just how capable SOF is in quickly adapting its command and control structure to accommodate for the ever changing operational environment.

Doctrine, however, is not as easy to change. It takes time, critical review, and approval that is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss. Regardless, doctrine needs to match operational command and control. Doctrine is what is taught to troops when they first enter a service and serves as a guiding tool throughout the rest of a service member's career. The changing of doctrine to match the operational command and control of MILDEC under Special Operations does not take the capability away from conventional forces, it simply gives it its rightful place in doctrine so that MILDEC can be understood for what it is and what it can do by the military from the beginning of a service member's career and throughout. This, in turn, will help make MILDEC a stronger tool for the conduct of warfare and conflict in the present and future style of

warfare that is low-intensity conflict as well as any other style should the need for the return to state-on-state warfare ever occur.

Consideration for Future Research

In researching the topics of military deception and low-intensity conflict, there were several topics that came to mind for future research options. Whether it is due to necessity or a lack of consideration, MILDEC is treated as nothing more than an additional skill within the United States Army. This does not give the MILDEC the structure, continuity and solid commitment that every great tool should be given. Future research may endeavor to look at what a proper independent command and control structure might look like. Similarly related fields, such as Psychological Operations, have had such independent structure since the Vietnam War era.

Another topic along those same lines that can be considered is the placement of the command and control of military deception under Psychological Operations (PSYOP). Both capabilities generally target the same individuals or groups of individuals. The only significant difference between these two is that PSYOP also must deal with the dissemination of truthful information as well as false. It was not until roughly the 2009 time frame that PSYOP doctrine was changed from the consideration of conducting operations where the source of the information was untrue to focusing on whether or not the information would only be attributed back to United States forces. Considerations should be made to bring MILDEC under the jurisdiction of PSYOP effectively bringing PSYOP back to its full range of capabilities as well as giving MILDEC a structured and continuous home, therefore bettering both capabilities.

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